

DATELINE: 98 WASHINGTON, D.C.  
ALINA ZERANSKI

JULY 14, 1976

STRUGGLING THROUGH THE LABYRINTH OF STRANGE WORDS  
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C. -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF  
PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE CAPITAL OF THE  
UNITED STATES--BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH  
WEEK AT THIS TIME. TODAY, A REPORT PREPARED BY ALINA ZERANSKI  
ON A VISIT TO A SPECIAL SCHOOL WHERE NEWCOMERS ARE HELPED  
TO ADJUST TO LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES.  
YOUR REPORTER IS \_\_\_\_\_.

NARR: THE OLD RED BRICK SCHOOL BUILDING IS LOCATED IN GEORGE-  
TOWN, THE MOST HISTORICAL AND COSMOPOLITAN SECTION OF  
WASHINGTON, D.C. BUT THIS IS NOT AN ORDINARY SCHOOL: IT IS  
THE AMERICANIZATION! SCHOOL. A YOUNG MAN ENTERS THE  
ADMISSIONS OFFICE WITH AN ELDERLY WOMAN SHYLY LOOKING  
AROUND. HE BROUGHT HIS MOTHER TO SCHOOL. SHE JUST ARRIVED  
FROM THE OLD COUNTRY AND SHE NEEDED SOME BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF  
ENGLISH. THE NEXT APPLICANT IS A 30-YEAR-OLD CLERK FROM  
VIETNAM. HE DOES SPEAK ENGLISH, BUT WANTS TO IMPROVE HIS  
SPELLING.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- CLARK

"THE PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL IS TO TEACH FOREIGN BORN ADULTS  
TO BETTER UNDERSTAND ENGLISH, SPOKEN ENGLISH, AND LISTENING..  
THE EMPHASIS IS ON SPEAKING; HOWEVER SOME GRAMMAR, SOME  
READING, SOME WRITING IS ALSO, OF COURSE, INCLUDED. THIS  
NECESSITY FOR ANYONE COMING TO ANOTHER COUNTRY WHERE A  
DIFFERENT LANGUAGE IS SPOKEN. YOU MAY CALL IT SURVIVAL  
ENGLISH, BECAUSE THE SURVIVAL OF THE IMMIGRANTS, THE NEW  
PERSONS HERE IN THIS COUNTRY, IS DEPENDENT ON THEIR ABILITY  
TO SPEAK AND UNDERSTAND ENGLISH... WITHOUT IT THEY CANNOT  
GET A GOOD JOB CANNOT GET AROUND THE COUNTRY. THEY JUST  
CAN'T UNDERSTAND, THEY ARE ISOLATED FROM THEIR FELLOW  
CITIZENS, THEIR FELLOW NEIGHBORS."

NARR: MEET JAMES CLARK, THE PRINCIPAL OF THE AMERICANIZATION SCHOOL, WHICH BELONGS TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OF WASHINGTON, D.C. IT IS FREE OF CHARGE FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF THE CITY. THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS OF MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA PAY A VERY SMALL FEE OF 50 CENTS AN HOUR.

THE SCHOOL WAS ESTABLISHED OVER FIFTY YEARS AGO TO HELP THE IMMIGRANTS TO LEARN THE LANGUAGE AND TO GIVE THEM SOME ORIENTATION. THE LOCATION WAS CHANGED SEVERAL TIMES. NOW IN THIS BUILDING, THERE IS ENOUGH SPACE FOR EVERYONE WILLING TO LEARN.

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DIPLOMATS, PERSONS ON CULTURAL EXCHANGE, INDUSTRIAL DELEGATES, ALL KINDS OF VISITORS ON AN EXTENDED STAY IN THE CAPITAL ALSO COME HERE. IN THE EARLY FORTIES, MANY GERMANS CAME. LATER, POLISH AND UKRAINIAN REFUGEES ARRIVED, THEN THE HUNGARIANS. NOW, THERE IS A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF NEWCOMERS FROM INDOCHINA.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- CLARK

"WE HAVE ABOUT 1,200 STUDENTS AT ANY ONE TIME. THEY ARE ALL ADULT STUDENTS, SIXTEEN AND OVER. SOME ARE IN THEIR SEVENTIES...THEY COME FROM A HUNDRED DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. THERE ARE FORTY DIFFERENT LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY THESE STUDENTS THAT ARE HERE. SOME ARE VERY POOR, SOME ARE VERY WEALTHY, SOME ARE VERY EDUCATED, THEY HAVE A PH.D., OR AN EQUIVALENT IN THEIR COUNTRY. SOME CANNOT READ OR WRITE IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE...THEY HAVE THAT COMMON DESIRE, THAT COMMON GOAL, TO SPEAK ENGLISH."

NARR: LAST YEAR 2000 PERSONS ATTENDED THIS SCHOOL. CLASSES ARE SMALL ENOUGH, 15 TO 19 STUDENTS, SO THAT EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE. IN A MODERN LAB, EVERY PERSON AT HIS

NARR: (CONT'D) OWN TIME AND CONVENIENCE CAN GET A TAPE, GO TO AN INDIVIDUAL BOOTH, LISTEN AND SPEAK AND REPEAT AS MUCH AS HE OR SHE LIKES OR NEEDS TO IN ORDER TO LEARN.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- CLARK

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"WE HAVE THE CLASSES DIVIDED INTO LEVELS. THERE IS THE BEGINNING, INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED ENGLISH STUDY. SO WHEN A PERSON FEELS VERY CONFIDENT AND WANTS TO GO ON, THEY ARE NOT OVER EXTENDED, YET WHILE THEY ARE CHALLENGED, THEY ARE NOT UNDER EXTENDED EITHER. THEY JUST FEEL COMFORTABLE AND THEN THEY MOVE FOREWARD AT THEIR OWN RANGE OF SPEED...WE HAVE CLASSES IN THE MORNING, IN THE AFTERNOON AND IN THE EVENING ON ALL LEVELS...WE HAVE FIVE SEPARATE LEVELS, FROM NO ENGLISH, THEN UP TO INTERMEDIATE AND THE TOP CLASS, THE ADVANCED CLASS. AND SO IT MAKES IT VERY EASY FOR ANYONE WHO DESIRES TO LEARN ENGLISH TO FIND THE TIME AND THE LEVEL FOR HIM. IF THEY WORK IN THE MORNING, THEN THEY COME IN THE AFTERNOON. WHEN THEY WORK ALL DAY LONG, THEN THEY ATTEND THE CLASS IN THE EVENING."

NARR: IN THE MOST ADVANCED CLASS, YOU CAN MEET STUDENTS PREPARING FOR A SPECIAL EXAMINATION SHOWING THEIR ADILITY IN ENGLISH BEFORE COLLEGE ADMISSION. HERE THE FOCAL POINT IS ON ADVANCED COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC. BUT IN THE OTHER CLASSES, THE CURRICULUM IS BASED ON PROBLEMS STUDENTS ENCOUNTER EVERY DAY: WHAT TO SAY IN THE BARBER SHOP? HOW TO FIND A DOCTOR? HOW TO MAIL A PARCEL? HOW TO CASH A CHECK? HOW TO LOOK FOR A JOB? IF SOMEONE HAS TIME, HE CAN ATTEND UP TO 25 HOURS EACH WEEK. OTHER STUDENTS COME ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK FOR A DAY OR FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS. SOMETIMES THEY ARE HERE FOR A MONTH, THEN THEY GET A JOB. A FEW MONTHS LATER THEY MAY RETURN FEELING THE NEED TO IMPROVE THEIR ENGLISH. SOME STAY HERE FOR A YEAR OR MORE.

